Passport Office Hyderabad are being upgraded on an ongoing basis. Govt. have also decided to identify better alternate premises for the office.

(c) Does not arise.

Indian Ambassadors in Laos

2749. DR. BAPU KALDATE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian diplomats consider their posting at Laos a punishment and they generally decline to serve as Indian Ambassadors in Laos;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government are of the opinion that the present situation is because of the not so good links between India and Laos; and

(d) if so, whether Govt. propose to establish new economic and political links with Laos; if so, the steps taken by Govt. in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) India and Laos have always enjoyed warm, cordial and friendly relations. Bilateral cooperation between the two countries has continued including through provision of training facilities for various technical courses in India to Laos candidates under ITEC and other programmes, deputation of Indian experts to Laos for carrying out feasibility studies for a number of projects, relief supplies from time to time, of cloth, medicines etc. and promotion of all-round trade and economic relations.

Minimum Wages for ICWA Employees

2750. SHRI A. NALLASIVAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the employees of ICWA are covered with minimum wages; and

(b) if not, what measures Govt. have taken to bring them under minimum wages?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) ICWA is an autonomous body and Government have no control over its functioning. Government has no information if the employees of the council are covered with minimum wages.

(b) Does not arise.

Comments on Sino-Indian Border Agreement

2751. SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about the comments made by border dispute specialist Nevil Maxwel in London regarding the agreement made between India and China to maintain peace on Sino-Indian border; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government on these comments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Government have not specifically reacted to the remarks made by Mr. Maxwell. However, the agreement has been signed with the objective of ensuring peace and tranquility along the ling of actual control in the India-China border areas. It is without prejudice to the respective positions of the two countries on the boundary question. It is the expectation of Government that implementation of the agreement will strengthen the likelihood that peace and